

# NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service  
Washington, D.C.



FS-0109

Contact: Cindy Chojnacky 703-605-4197  
703-605-5135

## FOREST SERVICE OFFERS PREFERRED PLAN FOR PROTECTING ROADLESS AREAS IN NATIONAL FORESTS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 13, 2000 – After receiving extensive public input, USDA’s Forest Service today presented Secretary Dan Glickman with its preferred plan for protecting nearly 60 million acres of roadless areas in national forests. Glickman will decide on a final plan in December.

“Our national forests are a precious national environmental treasure that we must preserve for future generations,” said Glickman. “In making my final determination, I will carefully consider the Forest Service’s recommendation and the 1.6 million written and oral comments submitted by interested Americans.

The Forest Service’s preferred plan, one of several alternatives contained in a final environmental impact statement, would -

- prohibit most road construction and reconstruction on 49.2 million acres of inventoried roadless areas, increasing to 58.5 million acres in April 2004 when the Tongass National Forest would be included;
- prohibit timber harvesting except for defined stewardship purposes in these same areas; and
- Allow road construction when necessary for public safety and resource protection.

Stewardship purpose timber harvests would occur only to maintain or improve roadless characteristics. Such harvests would need to improve habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species; reduce the risk of uncharacteristically severe fire; or restore ecological structure, function, and processes.

“Conservation leadership requires that we stand up for the values and lands entrusted to our care by the American people,” said Mike Dombeck, chief of USDA’s Forest Service. “Creation of the National Forest System by Gifford Pinchot and Teddy Roosevelt, although unpopular with some at the time, is today viewed as an enduring victory for conservation. It is my firm belief future generations will regard this proposal in the same light.” Dombeck went on to thank, “the thousands of Forest Service employees who worked tirelessly to make this day possible.”

In developing the roadless plan, the Forest Service sought public input by holding over 600 public meetings across the nation. Hundreds of thousands of people participated in this public process, generating over 1.6 million comments that were considered in the analysis and recommendation.

The four-volume environmental impact statement is available on the web at [roadless.fs.fed.us](http://roadless.fs.fed.us). Printed copies will be available for review at all Forest Service offices and 10,000 public and municipal libraries nationwide. Also, copies of the FEIS on CD, printed versions of the FEIS or a summary can be ordered via a toll-free information line at 1-800-384-7623 or 1-703-605-5299.